Development of high yield rice variety

1278. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the UN General Assembly declared the year 2004 as the International Year of Rice;

(b) if so, the measures taken by Government in pursuance thereof and the results achieved therefrom;

(c) whether any initiatives were made by the Central Government to invest in high yield varieties of rice, appropriate technology for post-harvest and pre-harvest machines and education of farmers on modern crop management methods; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the achievements made during each of the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A number of activities were taken up to celebrate 2004 as International year of rice to improve production of rice in the country. These included holding of National and International symposia/seminars/conferences and trainings, publicity for awareness about International Year of Rice and meetings etc. in different States. Celebration of International year of rice helped in motivating farmers and State/UT Governments to improve rice productivity and make judicious use of natural resources. Popularization of hybrid rice and the system of rice intensification are important results of efforts.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) invests in development and release of rice hybrids and high yielding varieties. Some of rice varieties from the list of large number of varieties released in last two years are Dhanrasi for low land areas of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Shanti, Mugad Sugandh and Sweta for Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, respectively; CSR 23 for alkaline and coastal saline areas of the country; Sukara Dhan-1 for upland hills of Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Uttaranchal; Sumati for coastal saline areas of West Bengal, Orissa, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Further three rice hybrids *viz.*, Suruchi 5402, Pant Sankar Dhan-3 and Narendra Usar Sankar Dhan were also released for cultivation.

The ICAR designed and fabricated a prototype for hitching mechanisms of the transplanter to the power tiller which is ready for test. Further, Korean and Chinese transplanters were evaluated for planting hybrid rice. The Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institutes (FMT & TIs) imparted training on pre-harvest technology which included training on equipment use for land preparation, seeding and planting, inter-culture, plant protection measures and irrigation equipments. The trainings on post harvest technology were conducted on operation of combine harvesters, self-propelled and tractor operated reapers, threshers, straw-reapers, cleaners, graders, etc. The FMT&TIs have trained 4710 trainees during 2003-04 and 5665 trainees during 2004-05.

The Central Government supported various schemes for education of farmers on modern crop management methods. Establishment of Agri-Clinic and Agri-Business Centers which were started in 2002-2003 continued in last two years also. In this scheme agriculture graduates are provided training in Agri-Business development for establishment of Agri-Clinic Centres aimed at providing fee based advisory and other support service to the farmers. Further, during 2004-05 new schemes on Mass Media Support to Agriculture and Kissan Call Centers were initiated by Central Government. Kissan Call Centers operate through toll free lines throughout country to provide expert advice to farmers. Mass Media Support to Agriculture is focusing on use of Doordarshan infrastructure for providing related information and knowledge to farming community.

Assistance to water scare States

1279. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that agricultural production is adversely affected in water scarce States like Tamil Nadu in case of failure of monsoon;

(b) whether Government have plan to help such States tide over this problem so that national annual crop production is not affected; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. The failure of monsoon has